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KICKAPOO ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE

The Green Clan

Preventing Water Pollution at Home

By Kerry Wedel, Watershed Coordinator

Everyone has a stake in keeping harmful pollutants (e.g. household chemicals, automotive fluids, trash, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) out of our water resources. Following are few simple things that you can do to help prevent water pollution:

- Do not dump unwanted household chemicals (e.g. solvents, paints, pesticides, fertilizers, cleaners, etc.) or automotive fluids (e.g. used oil, antifreeze, brake or transmission fluid, fuel, etc.) down a drain or onto the ground. These items should be taken to the Brown County Transfer Station, 1664 190th St. in Hiawatha (phone: 785-547-3552); or contact the Kickapoo Environmental Office (phone: 785-486-2601) for assistance.
- Make sure all household trash and unwanted household materials are disposed of properly through a solid waste collection service or at a local landfill facility. Recycle or reuse materials whenever possible.
- If you fertilize your lawn or garden:

1) Do not over-fertilize – follow the recommended application rates and procedures for the type of vegetation being fertilized. Consider doing a soil test to help determine the amount of nutrients needed for healthy plant growth and fertilize accordingly.

2) Do not fertilize when heavy rain is expected.

3) Sweep up fertilizer from walks or driveways and evenly distribute on vegetated areas. Do not wash or dump excess fertilizer into ditches or storm drains.

- Use a mulching blade on your lawn mower to shred and redistribute grass clippings and fallen leaves on your yard. If you bag grass clippings and/or leaves, put them in a compost pile and reuse as mulch after composting. Do not dump yard waste into ditches, drainageways or low lying areas where they can be washed into nearby creeks or streams during a rainstorm.

- Pick up pet waste and place in a trash container for proper disposal.
- Consider reducing the amount of lawn around your home by incorporating areas planted with native grasses and other native plants. Native grasses have extensive root systems which can greatly increase the amount of water that infiltrates into the soil, thereby reducing the amount of pollutants that are washed off the ground surface into creeks and streams. Native plants also provide valuable habitat and food for backyard wildlife, such as songbirds and butterflies.

Visit the Kansas Healthy Yards and Communities website (www.kansasgreenyards.org) for more environmentally friendly ideas; or contact Kerry Wedel, Kickapoo Environmental Office, 785-486-2601 ext. 3, kerry.wedel@ktik-nsn.gov for more information.

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Working Together for a Better Community!

Successful Community Clean Up; Garden Tilling Up Next!

By Sonny Fee, Solid Waste Coordinator

Throughout the week of March 11th, with the help of the Environmental Office and Maintenance Department employees, we conducted the Spring Community Clean Up. I would like to thank everyone for helping out. It was a big success! We filled (5) 30 cubic feet dumpsters in one week and a 6th dumpster over the weekend. We brought in about 600 tires and a lot of electronic waste as well.

Heads up!

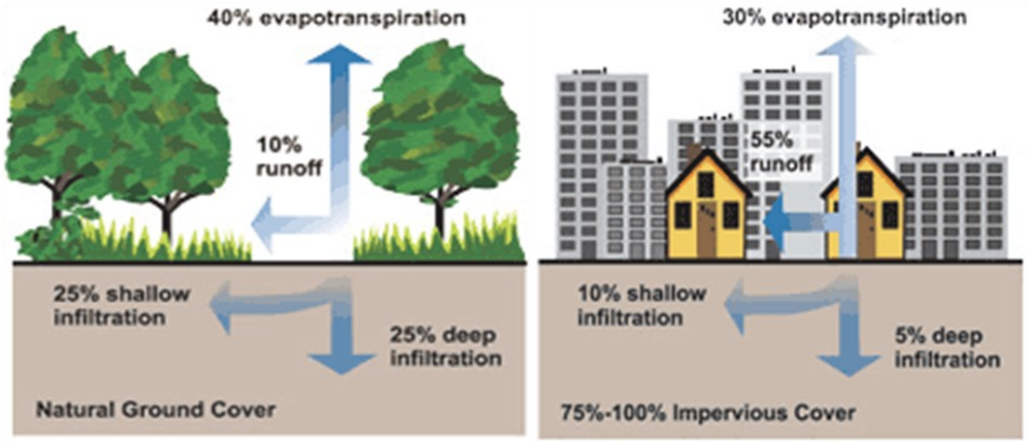
If you need your garden tilled, call me at (785) 486-2601 x4 so we can get you on the list! We will be tilling in the next couple of weeks.

Do you have suggestions about how we can improve our newsletter? Let us know!

Effects of Urbanization

By Tej Attili, Water Quality Coordinator

The porous and varied terrain of natural landscapes like forests, wetlands, and grasslands trap rainwater and snowmelt allowing it to slowly seep into the ground. Runoff tends to reach the receiving waters (creeks and ponds) gradually. In contrast, impervious (nonporous) urban landscapes like paved roads, bridges, parking lots, and building rooftops don't let runoff slowly percolate into the ground. During and after a precipitation event, water runs off in large amounts to the closest creeks, river, or ponds. Impervious cover in a watershed results in increased surface runoff.



As little as 10 percent impervious cover in a watershed can result in stream degradation. Urbanization also increases the variety and amount of pollutants transported to receiving waters, such as:

- Sediment from development and new construction sites
- Oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from automobiles
- Nutrients and pesticides from lawns and gardening
- Viruses and bacteria from failing septic systems and pet waste
- Road salts
- Antifreeze, paints, solvents, pharmaceuticals, personal care products and other household cleaning products
- Heavy metals from roof shingles, and motors

Large volumes of quickly flowing runoff can erode stream banks, damage streamside vegetation, and widen stream channels which in turn results in lower water depths during non-storm periods, higher than normal water levels during wet weather periods, increased sediment loads, heavy metals, other pollutants, and higher water temperatures. Increased pollutant loads can deteriorate drinking water supplies, harm fish and wildlife populations, kill native vegetation, and make recreational areas unsafe.